



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to OMiK Head of Mission Ambassador Wnendt**

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 23, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for being here at this special Permanent Council meeting and for your briefing on the latest political developments in Kosovo and the activities and plans of the Mission.

We think you will agree that much has happened, and much remains to be done in Kosovo, since your last appearance here back on January 19. On the encouraging side, as you point out in your report, Kosovo's political institutions managed a smooth and democratic transition after the death of President Rugova on January 21 and the resignation of the former Prime Minister on March 1. These developments, alongside the hard work of the Contact Group, UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari, and many others, is helping to continue making progress towards a Final Status Agreement in 2006.

As noted in Soren Jessen-Petersen's June 20 report to the UNSC, Kosovo Prime Minister Ceku and President Sejdiu have intensified efforts to implement the Standards and reach out to Kosovo's minorities. The United States is encouraged by these actions, but believes more must be done.

In this respect, we urge Kosovo's provisional authorities to invest particular energy and dedication to fulfilling the list of thirteen priority action items the Contact Group presented to the government on June 8. While all the Standards are important to Kosovo's long-term development, these actions, once implemented, will help promote multi-ethnicity and the rule of law.

While Pristina still has much to do, Serbia must do its part to solidify a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. We believe that continuing to block the participation of Kosovo Serbs in the provisional institutions of self-government (PISG) is not constructive and prevents Kosovo Serbs from directly representing and advocating their own interests. The recent directive from Serbia asking many Kosovo Serbs to choose whether to accept a salary from Pristina or Belgrade should be rescinded. We call upon Belgrade to support the three northern Kosovo Serb majority municipalities reestablishing ties with Kosovo's provisional government.

Kosovo and much of the Balkan region are in the midst of a pivotal transition as we seek to help move this region closer to full Euro-Atlantic integration. Against this backdrop, we thank Ambassador Wnendt for providing us his vision for restructuring the OSCE Mission in anticipation of the changes a status settlement will likely bring in the formation of the international civilian presence in Kosovo. The United States welcomes the 2007 Program Outline as written and fully supports the conclusions and recommendations outlined in it.

We agree that the most important areas of engagement for the Mission are likely to be municipal governance and protection of minority rights. In this respect, we note how the UN is already in the process of handing over its monitoring and reporting responsibilities in the field to the Mission. We must be ready to be flexible, and prepared to react quickly if other responsibilities are also given to the OSCE.

We believe that the Mission, through its expanding network of field offices and municipal monitoring teams, will be well-positioned to pro-actively monitor the decentralization process and human rights developments in Kosovo's 30 municipalities.

We endorse the Mission's plan to step up additional monitoring and support activities at the central government level. We support its continued engagement in providing capacity-building help to democratic institutions and the public safety and security sector.

This will be especially critical as a follow-on international civilian mission is established following status to oversee and help implement a status settlement. This new mission, which will have a mandate to exercise certain intervention powers, will have a much smaller footprint than UNMIK. It will rely on organizations like the OSCE to be its eyes and ears in the field, feeding it information on the degree to which promises made in the status settlement have been kept.

Let me add, Mr. Chairman, that we recognize that some further reshuffling of responsibilities between the OSCE and other international organizations will take place, depending, of course, on what makes best sense. We encourage all members of the international community to work cooperatively to create a division of labor that will contribute to full implementation of whatever status settlement emerges.

Finally, Ambassador Wnendt, allow me to thank you and your entire hardworking staff for exceptional efforts and dedication. There is no question that the work your Mission does makes a difference in helping Kosovo reach the high democratic and human rights standards the UN has set for it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.